8. Biotic Resources

Setting

This section of the EIR describes the potential effects of the City of Auburn Draft General Plan on the vegetation and fish and wildlife of the Plan area. Most of the information used in this section of the EIR was taken from the Draft General Plan and its supporting documentation "Vegetative Habitats of the Auburn Area" and "Wildlife Habitats of the Auburn Area."

Vegetation/Wildlife Habitat The vegetation types described in the General Plan and in the paragraphs below are based on the "California Wildlife Habitat Relationship System" (WHR) which is used primarily to predict the presence of wildlife species. Various other vegetation classification systems are available, one of which is used by the California Natural Diversity Data Base in listing special plant communities such as "Valley Oak Woodland" (Cheatham & Haller (1975) as modified by Holstein, Jensen and Holland).

The vegetative habitats in the Plan area are broken into ten types:

valley-foothill riparian
annual grassland
pasture
orchard/vineyard
blue oak woodland
blue oak-digger pine
montane hardwood
montane hardwood-conifer
mixed chaparral
urban and barren

These habitats broadly correlate with the vegetation types shown in Figure 8-1 (valley and blue oaks are not distinguished from "riparian-tree covered" and the oak vegetation types in the figure).

The valley-foothill riparian habitat is found primarily around low velocity stream flows, floodplains, and gentle topography such as the Dry Creek Area. The dominant tree species are cottonwood, California sycamore, and valley oak; white alder, box-elder and Oregon ash are also present in the subcanopy. Typical understory plants include wild grape, wild rose, California blackberry, blue elderberry, poison oak, buttonbrush, and willows. Herbaceous plants include sedges, rushes, grasses, miner's lettuce, Douglas sagewort, poison hemlock, and hoary nettle. Riparian vegetation is habitat for many wildlife species and is rapidly disappearing.

Valley-foothill riparian habitats provide food, water, mitigation and dispersal corridors, escape, nesting, and thermal cover for an abundance of wildlife, including as many as 50 amphibians and reptiles, 147 birds, and 55 mammals.

The annual grasslands are found on the flat plains and gently rolling hills. The open areas, often thought of as dry pasture, are good examples of grassland habitat. Introduced annual grasses are the dominant plants of this habitat, but numerous wildflowers are also present. Vernal pools, which often contain rare plants, are found within the broad category of annual grassland. Many wildlife species, including some raptors of special concern, use annual grasslands for foraging.

Pasture land is located on flat and rolling plains similar to the grassland habitat. The primary difference is that pasture land is planted and often irrigated. Pasture is habitat for ground-nesting birds such as waterfowl, pheasant, and sandhill crane.

Blue oak woodland is usually found on shallow, rocky infertile, well-drained soils and is well-adapted to drought. The form of this woodland ranges from nearly closed in better soils, to open and savanna-like in other areas. Shrubs are typically present, but not extensive, and the understory layer often consists of annual grassland. A lack of regeneration has been observed in the sapling stage (1-10 feet) and concern exists over the long-term viability of the blue oak woodlands. These woodlands provide breeding habitat for as many as 29 amphibian and reptile species, 57 species of birds, and 10 species of mammals. Acorns provide a valuable food source for many species of birds and mammals.

Blue oak-Digger pine woodland is a habitat diverse in structure, with a mix of hardwoods, conifers, and shrubs. As in the case of blue oak woodland, regeneration is a concern. Like blue oak woodland, this habitat is important for breeding, food supply, and cover.

Montane hardwood habitat type consists of canyon live oaks and other oaks growing in a variety of situations. Many species use this habitat (see the General Plan Supporting Documentation for a description).

Montane hardwood-conifer habitat typically occurs on coarse, well-drained soils in mountainous terrain with narrow valleys. It often occurs as a closed forest with at least one-third of the trees being conifer of various types and one-third being broad leaf trees of various types. Many wildlife species use this habitat.

Mixed chaparral is a brushland which generally occurs on steep slopes and ridges with relatively thin, well-drained soils. No wildlife species are restricted to this habitat type.

The urban landscape consists of tree groves, street strips, shade tree/lawn, lawn and shrub cover. Both native and exotic plant species can be found in the urban environment. Animal species increase in diversity as one moves from downtown to urban residential, to suburban areas.

Wetlands. Wetlands constitute a habitat of special significance. The following excerpt from the General Plan Supporting Documentation, Section 4, p. 7 explains the importance of wetlands:

Issues and topics concerning wetlands have been brought to "center stage" in the last few years. Our nation's emphasis on food and fiber production in the 1960's and 1970's saw the conversion of several million acres of wetlands to farmland. In the 1980's, the rapid urbanization of farmland and rangeland further complicated the situation.

In addition, since wetlands impact policy and decision at all levels of government (local, county, state, and federal), there are several definitions of what constitutes a wetland. Four federal agencies (the U.S. fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the USDA Soil Conservation Service) whose jurisdiction and/or programs impact wetlands, have come to a general agreement on a unified definition. For the purposes of this plan, the USDA, Soil Conservation Service's definition is used as follows:

> "Wetlands are defined as areas that have a predominance of hydric soils and that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and under normal circumstances does support, a prevalence of hydrophytic vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions".

This definition specifies hydrology, hydrophytic vegetation, and hydric soils. The Corps of Engineers, EPA, and Soil Conservation Services wetland definitions include only areas that are vegetated under normal circumstances. The Fish and Wildlife Service definition encompasses both vegetated and non-vegetated areas. For purposes of simplification, the characteristics and their technical criteria for identification are not described here.

The Supporting Documentation contains a map of the hydric soils in the Plan area (Figure A-1), as well as a map showing wetlands as determined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prior to 1977 based on satellite photographs (Figure A-2). Figure 8-1 of this EIR is a map of riparian vegetation produced by the Placer County Resource Conservation District and contained in the Draft General Plan (p. VII-29) this map is overlaid onto the proposed Land Use Plan to create Figure 8-2 which is contained in the Impacts discussion.

Special Plant Species. Table 1 contains a description of the sensitive plants of the general Auburn area (Canyon View Draft EIR, January, 1992). As shown on the list, these sensitive plants occur in a variety of habitats at varying elevations. Those habitats which appear to best predict the presence of sensitive plants are vernal pools, other wetlands, and those occurring on special soil types, such as gabbro (which includes serpentine).

Of the thirty plants listed, only five are legally protected (State of California). However, the Department of Fish and Game considers "Special Plants" to be on an equal footing with those which are legally protected in terms of environmental significance. Special Plants include candidate species, California Native Plant Society listed species, and others as shown in Table 8-2.

Table 8-1
SENSITIVE PLANTS OF THE GENERAL AUBURN REGION

PLANT TAXON	COM. NAME	LIST	R-E-D	FWS	CDFG	ELEV.	HABITAT
SPECIES OF PRIMARY CONCERN:							
Calystegia stebbinsii	Stebbins' morning-glory	1b	3-3-3	C2	E	800 - 1600'	gabbro, (serpentine?) open chaparral
Ceanothus roderickii	Pine Hill ceanothus	1b	3-1-3	C2	R	500 - 3000' ?	chap., woodland; serp./gabbro, Pine Hill area
Chamaesyce (Euphorbia) hooveri	Hoover's spurge	1b	3-2-3	C1	-	below 500'	vernal pools, dried mud flats
Eschscholzia rhombipetala	diamond - petaled Calif. poppy	1b	2-1-3	C2	-	below 5000'	dry flats, brushy slopes ?
Gratiola heterosepala	Bogg's Lake hedge-hyssop	1b	3-3-2	C2	E	2900'	vernal pools, shallow marshy ground
Helianthemum suffrutescens	Biabee Peak rock rose	1b	2-2-3	C2	-	about 500'	chaparral
Juncus leiospermus var. ahartii	Ahart's dwarf rush	1b	3-1-3	C1	-	150'	vernally moist valley grassland
Juncus leiospermus var. leiospermus	Red Bluff rush	1b	3-2-3	C2	-	150 2000'	vernal pools, low vernally moist places, red clay so
Legenere limosa	legenere	1b	3-3-3	C2	-	low elevations	vernal pools, valley grassland
Lewisia cantelowii	Cantelow's lewisia	1b	2-2-3	C3c	-	3000'	wet cliffs, shaded outcrops
Phacelia stebbinsii	Stebbins' phacelia	1b	2-2-3	C2	-	3000 - 5000'	metamorphic rock cliffs and ledges
Senecio layneae	Layne's butterweed	1b	2-2-3	C2	R	about 600'	open chaparral, foothill woodland
Sidalcea stipularis	Scadden Flat checkerbloom	1b	3-3-3	C1	E	2400'	freshwater seep, wet meadow
Wyethia reticulata	El Dorado Co. mule ears	1b	2-2-3	C2	-	1200 - 1500'	stoney red clay so chaparral, foothill woodland
SPECIES OF SECONDARY CONCERN:							
Drosera anglica	English sundew	2	2-2-1	-	-	4300 - 6000'	bogs, montane marshes
Eriogonum nutans var. glabrum	glabrous nodding buckwheat	2	2-1-1	-	-	4300 - 5500' ?	dry places
Arctostaphylos truei	True's manzanita	3	7-7-3	-	-	mid elevations ?	chaparral
Fritillaria eastwoodii	Butte Co. fritillary	3	1-2-3	C2	-	mid elevations ?	chaparral, foothill woodland
Plagiobothrys glyptocarpus var. modestus	Cedar Crest popcorn flower	3	3-1-3	C2	-	1500 to 4000' ?	foothill woodland; Cedar Crest area
Trillium kurabayashii	Kurabayashi's wakerobin	3	7-7-2	-	-	no data	no data
Clarkia mildrediae	Mildred's clarkia	4	1-1-3	-	-	mid- to upper forest	lower montane coniferous forest
Cypripedium fasciculatum	clustered lady's-slipper	4	1-1-2	C3c	-	middle forest zones	open rocky woods, redwoods to yellow pine
Darlingtonia californica	California pitcher plant	4	1-2-1	C3c	-	300 - 6000'	bogs, marshy places
Dichelostemma lacuna-vernalis	vernal pool brodiaea	4	1-1-3	C3c	-	below 800' ?	vernal pools
Haplopappus lucidus	sticky haplopappus	4	1-1-3	-	-	mid elevations ?	lower montane coniferous forest
Navarretia prolifera ssp. lutea	yellow bur navarretia	4	1-1-3	C3c	-	2700 - 4500'	yellow pine forest
Perideridia bacigalupii	Bacigalupi's perideridia	4	1-2-3	C3c	-	1500 - 5000'	red clay soil; chap., yellow pine and foothill woodland
Perideridia pringlei	Pringle's yampah	4	1-1-3	C3c	-	1000 - 3500'	open slopes and canyons
Quercus lobata	valley oak	4	1-2-3	-	-	below 2000'	foothill and valley woodland, riparian
Rhynchospora alba	white beaked rush	4	1-1-1	-	-	low elevations	bogs, freshwater marsh

LEGEND Table 18

Plant Taxon: as listed by Smith and Berg (1988).

List: refers to the list number on which the plant is included in Smith and Berg (1988; California Native Plant Society's sensitive plant inventory). 1a: Plants presumed extinct (PE) in California with date last seen, 1b: Plants rare or endangered in California and elsewhere, 2: Plants rare or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere, 3: Plants about which we need more information, and 4: Plants of limited distribution [a watch list]. Appendix 1 Plants considered, but not included.

R-E-D: rarity (R), endangerment (E), and distribution (D) code from Smith and Berg (1988) :

Rarity:
- 1 = Rare, but found in sufficient numbers and distributed widely enough that the potential for extinction or extirpation is low at this time
- 2 = Occurrence confined to several populations or to some extended population
- 3 = Occurrence limited to one or a few highly restricted populations, or present in such small numbers that

Endangerment:
- 1 = Not endangered
- 2 = Endangered in a portion of its range
- 3 = Endangered throughout its range

Distribution:
- 1 = More or less widespread outside California
- 2 = Rare outside California
- 3 = Endemic to California

FWS: C1 = A candidate taxon, Category 1: information sufficient for federal listing by FWS (1985). C2 = Also a candidate, Category 2: information insufficient for formal proposal for listing. C3c = Previously considered, but currently considered to be too common for listing.

CDFG: E = Endangered, R = Rare as designated by CDFG (1988).

Habitat, Elevation, Flowering Period: As reported in Munz and Keck (1959), Munz (1968), Smith and Berg (1988), and/or Abrams and Ferris (1923 - 1951)

Table 8-2
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
NATURAL HERITAGE DIVISION
NATURAL DIVERSITY DATA BASE
Special Plants
August 1991

"Special Plants" is a broad term used to refer to all the plant taxa inventoried by the Natural Diversity Data Base, regardless of their legal or protection status. Special Plant taxa are species, subspecies or varieties that fall into one or more of the following categories:

* Officially listed by California or the Federal Government as Endangered, Threatened or Rare;
* A candidate for state or federal listing as Endangered, Threatened or Rare;
* Taxa which meet the criteria for listing, even if not currently included on any list, as described in Section 15380 of the CEQA Guidelines;
* A Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or U.S. Forest Service Sensitive Species;
* Taxa listed in the California Native Plant Society's Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California;
* Taxa that are biologically rare, very restricted in distribution or declining throughout their range but not currently threatened with extirpation;
* Population(s) in California that may be peripheral to the major portion of a taxon's range but are threatened with expiration in California;
* Taxa closely associated with a habitat that is declining in California at an alarming rate (e.g. wetlands, riparian, old growth forests, desert aquatic systems, native grasslands, valley shrubland habitats, vernal pools, etc.).

SOURCE: California Dept. of Fish and Game

Endangered, Threatened, and Special Animal Species. The potential exists for endangered and threatened species to occur in the Plan area. (See Table 8-3). As shown in the table, habitat types for these special species vary widely, but generally have the common denominator of riparian habitat.

As in the case of plants, the California Department of Fish and Game considers special animals to be on an equal footing with those which are legally protected, "Special Animals" are defined in Table 8-4.

Table 8-3
ENDANGERED, THREATENED AND SPECIAL ANIMAL SPECIES
AUBURN/BOWMAN COMMUNITY PLAN AREA

Species and Status[1]	Principal Habitat[2]
Endangered:	
Bald Eagle	Large bodies of water or free-flowing rivers w/adjacent snags (feeding); large, stoutly-limbed trees, snags, or rocks near water (cover); charge. open-branched trees, especially ponderosa pine (reproduction)
Threatened:	
Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle	Low elevation elderberry bushes often at woodland margins.
Giant Garter Snake	Permanent to semi-permanent bodies of water.
Greater Sandhill Crane	Wet meadows, lakes, and emergent wetlands (summers; winters in Central Valley)
Federal Category 2 Candidate:	
Ferruginous Hawk	Open grasslands.
Red Legged Frog	Streams, marshes and ponds.
Species of Special Concern:	
Golden Eagle	Grasslands, savannas, and early successional stages of forest and shrub habitats (feeding), cliffs and large trees (cover and nesting).
Coopers Hawk	Dense stands of live oak, riparian or other forest habitats near water.
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Ponderosa pine, black oak, riparian deciduous, and mixed conifer.
Long Eared Owl	Riparian, live oak, and other defense stands trees.
Purple Martin	Variety of wooded low elevation habitats, including riparian.
Yellow Breasted Chat	Valley foothill riparian.
Yellow Warbler	Riparian, ponderosa pine, chaparral and other.
California Horned Lizard	Valley foothill hardwood, conifer, riparian and annual grassland habitats.
Fully Protected:	
Black Shouldered Kite	Grasslands, pastures where trees present.

Legal Status (See the Federal Register for legal definitions of federal status)

FED: Endangered = Federally listed Endangered
FED: Threatened = Federally Listed Threatened
FED: Prop Endang = Proposed for Federal Listing as Endangered
FED: Prop Threat = Proposed for Federal Listing as Threatened
FED: Candidate 1 = Candidate for Federal Listing, Category 1
FED: Candidate 2 = Candidate for Federal Listing, Category 2
FED: List 3A = Withdrawn from candidacy for Federal Listing
FED: List 3B = Withdrawn from candidacy for Federal Listing
FED: List 3C = Withdrawn from candidacy for Federal Listing

CALIF:Endangered = California Listed Endangered
CALIF: Threatened = California Listed Threatened
CALIF: Rare = California Listed Rare

[1]SOURCE: Auburn/Bowman Community Plan Conservation & Open Space Component of the environmental Resources, Management Element

[2]SOURCE: *California's Wildlife*, Vol. I,II. California Statewide Wildlife Habitat Relationships System, Dept. of Fish and Game, April 1990. (Except Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle)

Table 8-4
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
NATURAL DIVERSITY DATA BASE
Special Animals
August 1991

"Special Animals" is a broad term used to refer to all the vertebrate and invertebrate taxa of concern to the Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB), regardless of their legal or protection status. Special Animals listed with a code fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Officially listed or proposed for listing under the State and/or Federal Endangered Species Acts.
- State or Federal candidate species for possible listing.
- California Department of Fish and Game Species of Special Concern.

[Note: The NDDB breaks these categories down into the following subcategories:]

Listed as Endangered
Listed as Threatened by the State of California
California Candidate for listing as Endangered
California Candidate for listing as Threatened
California Department of Fish and Game "Species of Special Concern"
Listed as Endangered by the Federal Government
Listed as Threatened by the Federal Government
Proposed as Endangered by the Federal Government
Proposed as Threatened by the Federal Government
Federal (BLM and USFS) Sensitive Species
Category 1 Candidate for Federal listing (Taxa for which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has sufficient biological information to support a proposal to list as Endangered or Threatened)
Category 2 Candidate for Federal listing (Taxa which existing information indicates may warrant listing, but for which substantial biological information to support a proposed rule is lacking)
"Recommended" for Category 1 status by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
"Recommended" for Category 2 status by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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SOURCE: California Dept. of Fish and Game

Important Wildlife Species. In addition to the special animals described above, the species listed in Table 8-5 are identified in the General Plan as being worthy of protective measures:

Table 8-5
AUBURN GENERAL PLAN AREA
WILDLIFE SPECIES DESCRIPTIONS

Conservation and Open Space

1. **Deer** - Deer within the planning area are non-migratory Columbian Black-Tailed Deer. These deer live in the same area year-round and do not have wintering and summering areas. Deer have been observed throughout the planning area and are numerous in some locations.

2. **Wild Turkey** - The Department of Fish and Game has planted wild turkeys in Placer County because of excellent habitat. The original plants were made in the Coon Creek drainage near Garden Bar Road. This was determined successful and a viable population has been established. The birds have spread along different water courses and are continuing to be observed in new areas. The primary habitat types suitable for turkeys include hardwoods (deciduous oaks, live oak, and madrone), and woodland-grass (hardwoods associated with herbaceous elements).

   Wild turkey sightings have been reported in the planning area and the area has a huntable population of turkeys although the exact number of birds is not known.

3. **California Quail** - California quail are common. Preferred habitat for these game birds is woodland-brush areas interspersed with grassy areas. Quail numbers vary from area to area depending upon the amount, quality, and distribution of food, water and cover. Excellent habitat occurs in the berry-covered areas.

4. **Band-Tailed Pigeon** - Band-Tailed Pigeons are very common. Flocks numbering in the hundreds have been observed during the fall at various locations in the process of feeding and resting during their migration to southern California and Mexico. Large flocks spend the winter on ridges along the American and Bear River drainages.

   The presence of pine-oak woodlands and other mast producing trees determine the abundance of Band-Tailed Pigeons. Nearby chaparral stands are also important, providing seeds and berries.

5. **Mourning Dove** - The Mourning Dove is a common upland game species. Numbers are generally high until cold weather occurs in the fall when most migrate south.

   Doves live principally on weed seeds and grain that has fallen to the ground. These birds have proven over the years to be an adaptable species.

6. **Raptors** - The Golden Eagle and the Bald Eagle use both the American River and Bear River canyons for wintering areas, and nesting sits likely exist in both drainages.

SOURCE: City of Auburn General Plan, pp. VII-26, \

Impact Evaluation Criteria

The existing 1978 Auburn General Plan contains a number of goals and policies on the protection of vegetation, fish and wildlife which have been used as evaluation criteria in past environmental and project review. Those most related to biological resources are reprinted below (p. 55):

> **Goal 3: Preserve all outstanding areas of natural vegetation or fish and wildlife habitat.**
>
> Policies
> 1. Identify all important fish and widlife areas within the plan area.
> 2. Retain all stream influence areas in their natural condition, including flood plains and riparian vegetation.
> 3. Provide for the protection of all rare and endangered species.

The City also has a Heritage Tree Ordinance (Ordinance No. 583) which applies to trees which are 24-inches in diameter or greater. Approval of permits to remove trees is by the Director of Public Works. The following intent statement is part of the Ordinance:

> SECTION 10-4.01. INTENT - PURPOSE. This chapter is adopted because the City has many oak, pine, and other trees the preservation of which is beneficial to the health and welfare of the citizens of this City in order to preserve the scenic beauty, prevent soil erosion protect against flood hazards and the risk of landslides, counteract the pollutants in the air and maintain the climatic balance within the City.
>
> It is the intent of this chapter to establish regulations for the removal of heritage trees within the City in order to retain as many trees as possible consistent with the purpose hereof and the reasonable economic enjoyment of private property.

In past Environmental Impact Reports, effects on riparian vegetation have been considered significant and avoidance has been required (e.g., Meadowbrook Woods EIR); similarly, oak woodlands have been considered significant features and have been set aside in open space (e.g., Valley Hills EIR).

At the State level, the Department of Fish and Game is responsible for implementing the California Fish and Game Code and the California Native Plant Protection Act which include protection for rare and endangered species. The Department also has a policy protecting wetlands, which are defined in similar terms as those used by the US Army Corps of Engineers as discussed below. The first statement in that policy reads: "I. California's remaining wetlands provide significant and essential habitat for a wide variety of important resident and migratory fish and wildlife species." Finally, the Department manages an information program called the California Natural Diversity Data Base which records sitings of rare, threatened, endangered and otherwise sensitive species, as well as occurrences of natural communities. The Data Base considers natural communities as being species equivalents in rating their status (such as rarity, endangeredness, etc.). The basis for this practice is that natural communities have value by themselves and that they may harbor sensitive species which have not yet been identified and which might not be identified and protected before they are eliminated. While this consideration of natural communities is not a matter of formal Department policy, it is sufficiently

supported by experts in the field, including the biologist consulted for this EIR, to be used as criteria for impact evaluation.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines state that a proje may have a significant effect on the environment when any of a number of conditions occur including the following one related to biological resources:

> (a) The project has the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below-self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal . . . .

Additionally, Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines state that "a project will normally have a significant effect on the environment if it will:"

> (a) Conflict with adopted environmental plans and goals of the community where it is located; . . .
>
> (c) Substantially affect a rare or endangered species of animal or plant or the habitat of the species;
>
> (d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species; (Only the biology related items are listed.)

At the Federal level, both the Army Corp of Engineers and the Fish and Wildlife service are responsible for implementing federal legislation, most notably t Endangered Species Act and the Federal Clean Water Act. A key issue with bo agencies is wetland protection (wetland/riparian areas are shown in Figures 8-1 and 8-2).

The Fish and Wildlife Service has a wetland policy calling for the protection of native wetlands. The policy begins with the following sentence: "Wetlands provide important fish and wildlife benefit as well as other significant functions (flood control, water quality maintenance, water supply recreation, scientific research) to the nation."

Impacts

1. **Impacts to oak woodlands.** Past findings of environmental review on individual development projects imply that the total loss of native trees on a property would be regarded as a significant impact. (See Impact Evaluation Criteria). Blue oak woodlands in particular are of concern because of the lack of observed regeneration.

   The Draft General Plan Goals, Policies, and Implementation Measures most directly related to vegetation are shown in Table 8-6. Goal 1 and Policy 1.1 directly speak to the preservation of trees and native vegetation:

Table 8-6
AUBURN GENERAL PLAN
GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE
RELATED TO VEGETATION

Goal 1: Preserve areas of natural vegetation, trees, topographic features, wildlife habitat, and riparian corridors.

Policy

1.1 Identify, protect and enhance natural, riparian wildlife habitat and vegetation areas and encourage preservation and maintenance of these areas in as natural a state as possible.

1.2 Adopt and implement a tree ordinance in order to focus attention on the importance of preserving existing native vegetation.

Implementation

A. The City shall prepare and adopt a Tree Ordinance.
Responsibility: Community Development
Time Frame: 1993
Related Policy: 1.2

Oak woodland loss within City limits ~ The majority of lands within City Limits are urban or otherwise disturbed. The primary oak woodlands remaining are shown in Figure 8-2; they are described in Table 8-7 below.

Table 8-7
REMAINING OAK WOODLANDS WITHIN CITY LIMITS

A.	Shirland Canal	Designated primarily Open Space Private (OSP) but also designated Urban Low Density Residential (ULDR-3 du/ac) and Low Density Residential (LDR-1 ac min.)
B.	SE Corner of Existing City	Designated Urban Low Density Residential (ULDR-3du/ac) with a Cluster Development (CD) and an Open Space Private (OSP) overlay designation.
C.	Baltimore Ravine Area	Designated Urban Reserve a range of urban uses are described, but a Specific Plan and General Plan Amendment is required. The Land Use chapter of this EIR further recommends application of a 5-acre minimum.

Note: Only areas mapped as "Oak Woodland" or "Oak Ponderosa Pine" are considered in compiling the above list because they have the most potential for oak loss. "Oak Grass - Mostly Open Oak Stands" are not called out because the disbursed nature of this community reduces the potential for significant impacts.

The Open Space Private (OSP) designation is a viable means of protecting viable stands of oak woodlands. OSP is intended primarily to protect natural areas, though it does allow recreational uses with a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.25. In the case of the Shirland Canal area OSP is applied to a large central portion of the oak woodland there centered around riparian woodland

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along the Canal — this is an example of effective woodland habitat protection. A variation of this approach slated for the Southeast Corner area since the CD and OSP designations are overlaid there. The Clustered Development (CD) designation is intended to guide development away from sensitive natural environments. The percentage of open space across developed area is intended to be determined on a site-by-site basis as part of the project review procedure. This process formalizes the current City practice of protecting significant natural areas identified in the environmental review process; an example is the oak woodland protected within the Valley Hills subdivision. This type of approach requiring natural habitat setasides has been used in other jurisdictions effectively; in Tuolumne County, for example, a 20% figure is utilized for general woodland setaside. The percentage provision assures that setasides are of a meaningful size.

It is possible that the Tree Ordinance called for in Implementation A will address the specifics of setting aside viable woodland stands, but this is not known at this time. Similarly, Implementation D, which calls for a Habitat Protection Plan, may adequately spell out the means of protecting woodlands, but this cannot be assured without further policy or implementation language.

The Baltimore Ravine Area is under Urban Reserve. Any development proposals will be subject to Specific Plans and General Plan Amendments. The possible effect of these future developments on oak woodlands is too speculative to evaluate in any detail at this time. However, in a worst case scenario, significant and unmitigatable impacts could result given the extent of woodland coverage in this area. If development were to occur at the five acre minimum density discussed in the Land Use Chapter of this EIR, viable stands of oak woodland would likely remain.

Oak Woodland loss within the Sphere of Influence ~ Figure 8-2 shows the major areas of oak woodland (including Oak Ponderosa Pine) within the Proposed Sphere of Influence. Most of these woodlands are in peripheral locations as described in Table 8-8.

Table 8-8
EXISTING MAJOR OAK WOODLAND AREAS
WITHIN PROPOSED SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

D.	Auburn Waste-water Treatment Plant	Designated Industrial/Public
E.	Fiddler Green Canal Area	Designated: Low Density Residential (LDR-1 du/ac) with overlay designations of Clustered Development (CD) and Open Space Private (OSP); Rural Density Residential (RDR-0.5 du/ac) with overlay designations of Clustered Development (CD) and Open Space Private (OSP)
F.	NW Sphere of	Designated Low Density Residential (LDR-1 du/ac) with an overlay designation of Clustered Development (CD) and Open Space Private (OSP)

G.	East Dry Creek Vicinity	Designated Rural Density Residential (RDR-0.5 du/ac) with a combining designation of Clustered Development (CD) and Open Space Private (OSP).
H.	American River Overlooks	Designated Rural Density Residential (RDR-0.5 du/ac) and Low Density Residential (LDR-1.0 du/ac) both with combining designations of Clustered Development (CD) and Open Space Private (OSP).
I.	Shockley Road Vicinity	Designated Urban Low Density Residential (ULDR-4 du/ac) with no combining districts.

In general, the Plan uses the Clustered Development (CD) with Open Space Private (OSP) combing designations in these woodland areas. As described above under "Oak Woodland Loss within City Limits", this approach has the potential to be effective in protecting viable stands of woodland, particularly when supplemented with some specific policy and implementation language. The principal exceptions are areas D and I (Table 8-8) which are designated Industrial/Public and Urban Low Density Residential (ULDR-4 du/ac), respectively. Area D is the Auburn Wastewater Treatment Plant area. The proposed treatment plant expansion does not extend into the woodland area but future impacts could still occur if some unidentified modification of the area occurs, such as tree removal and grading for a parking or storage area, or if the area is split into parcels and sold. The urban densities proposed for Area I have the potential to eliminate significant stands of vegetation lacking any moderating combining designations. No provision for off-site replacement is available for mitigation, either in existing or proposed policies and implementation measures.

In summary, there is potential for protecting viable stands of oaks in the Plan area if currently-proposed policies are supplemented with specifics on how this will occur. However, complete avoidance does not appear feasible because several parcels of land are completely covered with woodland and development at the proposed densities will not be possible without loss of large woodland acreages. Offsite woodland replacement does not offer sufficient mitigation for a number of reasons; including the fact that receiving lands have not been identified and may not be available.

Conclusion: Based upon the above criteria and analysis, impacts on oak woodlands will be significant and unmitigatable.

2. **Impacts on riparian habitat.** As shown in Figure 8-2, riparian habitat occurs throughout the Plan area and may be affected by any or all of the proposed land uses. Notable possible conflicts are in the Urban Low Density Residential areas of A and B (within City Limits), in the Urban Low Density Residential area of J (Sphere of Influence), and the Industrial areas of D, K, and L (Sphere of Influence). However, impacts are possible in many more locations than these. Table 8-9 contains the goals and policies of the Draft Auburn General Plan most related to wetlands and riparian areas.

Table 8-9
CITY OF AUBURN GENERAL PLAN
GOALS, POLICIES, & IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES
RELATED TO WETLANDS/RIPARIAN AREAS

Goal 1: Preserve areas of natural vegetation, trees, topographic features, wildlife habitat, and riparian corridors.

Policies

1.1 Identify, protect and enhance natural riparian wildlife habitat and vegetation areas and encourage preservation and maintenance of these areas in as natural a state as possible.

1.3 Conserve the quality of habitats which support fish and wildlife species so as to maintain populations at sustainable levels.

Implementation

C. The City shall prepare and adopt a Stream, Canal and Waterway Protection Ordinance.

Responsibility: Community Development
Time Frame: 1993
Related Policy: 7.4, 7.6

Additionally, the Draft General Plan text (p. VI-45) contains the following text which explains the intent of the Goals, Policies, and Implementation Measures:

> Some of the constraints, such as Williamson Act lands and riparian vegetation, imply that development is not appropriate and should be avoided in these ares. Other constraints would also limit development but could allow development after careful attention to site planning and mitigation monitoring.
>
> Some other constraints are not shown on the map but would be considered in any development proposal. These include wetlands, which are closely correlated with riparian vegetation areas; fire hazard areas which are correlated with steep slopes and hydric soils, which are not considered a development constraint in themselves, but which present the greatest opportunity for land banking for riparian and wetland vegetation.
>
> The policies listed earlier and included in the implementation section have been carefully developed to promote the protection of sensitive environmental areas and to concentrate development where feasible.

These policies and implementation measures are likely to protect wetlands, particularly given the supplementary regulatory activities of the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. However, full and consistent avoidance is not assured due to the lack of

specificity regarding those wetland conditions that will be avoided, the lack of guidelines on off-site replacement if encroachments are to be permitted, and the potential for some marginal and peripheral wetlands to be ignored since they are not represented on the Land Use Map; the use of the Open Space designation is the most assured means of identifying and protecting wetlands as described in the Mitigation Measures section.

Conclusion: Based upon the above impact evaluation criteria and analysis, impacts on wetlands will be significant but mitigatable.

3. **Impacts to special plant species and natural communities.** As described in the setting section, the presence of special plant species is not possible to predict based on broad mapping of vegetation types. However, some preliminary indication that impacts may occur is that small lots and urban uses are designated in areas of serpentine soils and that some wetland impacts may occur. Any significant impacts could be mitigated through environmental review and avoidance of special plants if they exist. The procedures for this are outlined by the following goal and policies (Table 8-10):

Table 8-10
CITY OF AUBURN DRAFT GENERAL PLAN
GOALS, POLICIES, AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES
RELATED TO SPECIAL PLANT COMMUNITIES

Goal 1: Preserve areas of natural vegetation, trees, topographic features, wildlife habitat, and riparian corridors.

Policies

1.7 As necessary, require field studies as part of project review. These studies shall document the possible occurrence of special status plant and wildlife species and provide a method for their protection, monitoring, replacement or for otherwise mitigating development near the sensitive habitats.

Implementation

D. The City shall prepare and adopt a Habitat Protection Plan based upon the natural resources constraints maps of the General Plan.

Responsibility: Community Development
Time Frame: 1995
Related Policy: 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.9, 2.6, 5.4, 7.6

Special natural communities are rare or unique assemblages of plants which are tracked along with special species by the Natural Diversity Data Base. Two of the better known examples are Valley Oak Woodland and Vernal Pool. Others which may occur in the Plan area include:

- Gabbroic Northern Mixed Chaparral
- Mixed Serpentine Chaparral
- Leather Oak Chaparral

- Serpentine Bunchgrass
- Others

The recognition of these natural communities requires the presence of a botanist with familiarity with the particular classification system used by the Natural Diversity Data Base. Because special language is not present on natural communities in the policies, it is possible that one of the lesser known special natural communities, if present, could be impacted. This could be avoided by adding a policy for specifically defining and protecting these features.

Conclusion: Based upon the above criteria and analysis, impacts to special plants will be less than significant; impacts to special natural communities have the potential for significance, but can be avoided.

4. **Impacts to special animal species.** The presence of special animal species is even more difficult to predict than that of special plant species based on broad habitat mapping (except that wet habitats are consistently important). The General Plan requires the use of a relatively recently available predictive tool developed by the State called the Wildlife Habitat Relationships system (see Policy #1 listed in Table 8-11 below). Policy 1.4 specifically calls for the protection of native species, including threatened and endangered species (see Table 8-11).

Table 8-11
DRAFT CITY OF AUBURN GENERAL PLAN
GOALS, POLICIES, AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES
RELATED TO SPECIAL STATUS ANIMAL SPECIES

Goal 1: Preserve areas of natural vegetation, trees, topographic features, wildlife habitat, and riparian corridors.

Policies

1.4 Protect, restore and enhance habitats for native animals and protect threatened and endangered species.

1.9 Encourage the use of the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (WHR) system as a guide for protecting, maintaining and enhancing vegetation.

Implementation

D. The City shall prepare and adopt a habitat Protection Plan based upon the natural resources constraints maps of the General Plan.

Responsibility: Community Development
Time Frame: 1995
Related Policy 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.9, 2.6, 5.4, 7.6

Given these policies in combination with the consolidation of new development in and around existing urban areas, it appears that effects on special animal species will be avoided.

Conclusion: Based upon the above criteria and analysis, impacts to special animals will be less than significant.

5. **Impacts to general Wildlife Species.** As shown in Table 8-12, the Draft General Plan contains a number of policies protecting wildlife habitat. In addition to those policies noted in the above impact discussions, particularly important policies are:

   - 1.5 and 3.3, which call for locating development to maintain wildlife habitat;
   - 1.7 which requires field studies as part of project review;
   - 2.2 and 2.5 which protect water quality;
   - 3.4 which calls for open spaces being established into perpetuity, and
   - 3.5 which calls for linkage of open space areas.

   The following Implementation Measures are also critical to impact reduction:

   - B which implements Policy 3.4 described above;
   - C which calls for a stream protection ordinance
   - D which calls for a Habitat Protection Plan

Table 8-12
CITY OF AUBURN DRAFT GENERAL PLAN
GOALS AND POLICIES RELATED TO FISH AND WILDLIFE

Goal 1: Preserve areas of natural vegetation, trees, topographic features, wildlife habitat, and riparian corridors.

Policies

1.1	identify, protect and enhance natural, riparian wildlife habitat and vegetation ares and encourage preservation and maintenance of these ares in as natural a state as possible.
1.2	Adopt and implement a tree ordinance in order to focus attention on the importance of preserving existing native vegetation.
1.3	Conserve the quality of habitats which support fish and wildlife species so as to maintain populations at sustainable levels.
1.4	Protect, restore and enhance habitats for native animals and protect threatened and endangered species.
1.5	Carefully plan development in areas known to have particular value for wildlife and locate development so that wildlife habitat is maintained.
1.6	Encourage private landowners to adopt good wildlife habitat management practices.

Continued ...

1.7 As necessary, require field studies as part of project review. These studies shall document the possible occurrence of special status plant and wildlife species and provide a method for their protection, monitoring, replacement or for otherwise mitigating development near the sensitive habitats.

1.8 Encourage preservation and protection from urban encroachment the rural/agricultural areas in the Auburn community outside the Plan area.

1.9 Encourage the use of the California Widlife Habitat Relationships (WHR) system as a guide for protecting, maintaining and enhancing vegetation.

Goal 2: Minimize adverse development impacts to the natural environment.

Policies

2.1 Develop, adopt and implement a hillside development ordinance. (LU 3.4)

2.2 Continue to implement the grading ordinance of the City of Auburn to protect against sedimentation and soil erosion.

2.3 The City shall use the natural resources/constraints maps, as amended, prepared by the Resource conservation District for the General Plan Open Space/Conservation District for the General Plan Open Space/Conservation Element as part of the project review process, including identification/ verification of said constraints.

2.4 Urbanization and development which requires typical City services (police, fire, water, sewer) shall be developed within the City limits.

2.5 Encourage a program for the control of residential pesticides to prevent potential damage to birds, fish and other wildlife.

2.6 Encourage development of all building sites and residences in a manner minimizing disturbance to natural terrain and vegetation and maximizing preservation of natural beauty and open space.

Goal 3: Identify, protect and enhance open areas and greenbelts throughout the planning area for the protection of wildlife and for use and enjoyment by residents and visitors.

Policies

3.1 Encourage both private and public ownership and maintenance of open space.

3.2 Provide for greenbelts or linear open spaces which shall be preserved to enhance developed areas as well as to maintain clear boundaries of the Auburn community.

3.3 Encourage planned unit developments as a means of preserving open space within and adjacent to residential developments.

3.4 The City shall require that all designated open space areas within a project be zoned for open space use i perpetuity.

3.5 The City, where possible, shall require open space areas to be linked together by providing additional open space ares or at a minimum provide connections using trails, banks of creeks, and rights-of-way.

In spite of the General Plan's relatively effective set of policies protecting wildlife, the large area of urbanization entailed suggests that a substantial amount of habitat will be lost and cannot be replaced.

Conclusion: Based upon the above criteria and analysis, impacts to general wildlife species will be significant and unmitigable.

6. **Impacts of cumulative City and County buildout.** The cumulative effects of City and County development are similar to those reported above because County designations outside of the proposed Sphere of Influence are low density and low intensity in nature

Conclusion: Based upon the above criteria and analysis, the cumulative impacts of combined City/ County buildout to oak woodlands and wildlife may be significant and unmitigable.

The following discussion from Final page 54 resulted from changes made by the Planning Commission to the draft Plan:

In many of those instances where land uses have been intensified there will be increased adverse effects on oak woodlands and wetlands. It should be noted that a substantial area in the Mt. Vernon region was decreased in density from 1 du/ac to 2 du/acre by the Planning Commission which will reduce impacts in this area. However, the main concern in this FEIR is areas where impacts may be intensified.

Ref: Final EIR p.54

In some cases, the intensification occurs in areas already identified as potentially impacted in the DEIR. In other cases the changes create new locations of development/wetlands or development woodland conflicts. In most of these latter cases, the wetlands or woodlands are situated in a way which makes significant effects to them avoidable. Thus, most of the changes are analogous to those characterized as significant but avoidable in the DEIR (pages 8-18 and 8-20). However, there is one instance in which a parcel is almost entirely covered with woodlands and impacts would be unavoidable (Parcel F/28 – Chevreaux, North of Marguerite Mine Road). This new impact does not alter the DEIR conclusion on woodlands, however, because those impacts were found to be significant and unmitigable due to several parcels which are completely wooded. Thus DEIR conclusions on woodlands and wetlands are unchanged.

Impact conclusions on special plants, animals, and natural communities are also unchanged because they are tied to proposed Plan avoidance strategies rather than specific geographical locations. Impacts to wildlife and cumulative biotic impacts remain significant and unmitigable as reported in the DEIR (pp. 8-22 to 8-24).

Mitigation Measures

1a. **Additional implementation language providing guidance on how viable oak stands within developments should be established.** Guidance on oak woodland protection should be incorporated into the General Plan. This guidance should address the following points:

- The percentage of any given project site's oak woodland acreage which should be set aside – a minimum of approximately 20% is recommended for oak woodlands which are adjacent to permanent open spaces containing natural habitat; a higher percentage, setaside, perhaps as much as 50% should be required where land use proposals will create islands of habitat;

- The criteria for determining acceptable setaside lands – at a minimum the oak trees should be in good condition. If woodlands adjacent to other habitats, particularly riparian areas, exist, these should be priority setaside lands. If woodlands with regeneration exhibited by trees in the sapling stage are present, these should also be priority setaside lands;
- The management of the setaside woodlands into the future. The contrasting needs of public access and fire fuel management with the desirability of natural habitat conditions should be addressed;

- If exceptions from the setaside requirements are to be granted then replacement requirements should be addressed (see 1b, below).

This guidance could be part of Implementation A which calls for a Tree Ordinance, or perhaps more comprehensively as a new Implementation for Policy 3.3 which calls for planned unit developments.

1b. **Oak woodland replacement requirements.** The following requirements also should be considered for incorporation into the Draft General Plan policies and possibly into the Tree Preservation Ordinance:

- Developers should be required to provide off-site lands, or adequate fees, for tree plantings if woodlands over one acre cannot be protected on site.

- The City may also wish to establish a woodland mitigation bank and identify potential mitigation receiving sites within the Plan area. A variety of alternative sites with low density designations could be mapped and provisions could be made for acquisition of these sites or compensation of the land owner for their use.

- Oak woodland restoration plans should include consideration of effects on habitat at the off-site locations.

- Oak woodland restoration plans should incorporate native understory plantings in order to create a plant community rather than a simple stand of trees,

- Unavoidable impacts to native oaks, other than blue and valley oaks, should be mitigated for through replacement at 5:1 for trees greater than four inches diameter at breast height (dbh) and at 1:1 for trees less than four inches dbh. For blue and valley oaks, the replacement requirement for less than four inch dbh trees should be increased to 3:1 due to the poor regeneration of these species.

- The restoration plans should include a monitoring and replacement program, and

- The restoration plans should be prepared by qualified specialists experienced in restoration ecology.

1c. **Application of the Clustered Development (CD) and Open Space Private (OSP) overlay designations to areas D and I described in the Impact section.** The areas described as D and I in the Impact discussion should have the clustering provisions of the General Plan applied to mitigate potential effects on oak woodlands there. Additionally, the CD/OSP designation should be applied to the following areas, numbered according to the map showing Planning Commission changes to the September, 1992 Draft General Plan:

Ref: Final EIR p.54

G/25
F/25
C/44
G/50
D/52D
C/11
G/2D

Effectiveness of Measures: These measures will improve the effectiveness of proposed Plan policies but impacts will remain unmitigated.

Implementation: General Plan revision, Tree Preservation Ordinance, and environmental review procedures.

Mitigation Monitoring: General Plan adoption procedure environmental review process.

2a. **Additional implementation defining the conditions under which wetlands may be destroyed and the requirements for replacement in these situations.** The Draft General Plan should be revised to include a new implementation measure or an augmented Implementation C, to define the conditions under which wetlands can be destroyed. It is suggested that wetlands over one acre, and those having well-developed woody riparian or high value habitat features, not be included in any categories of wetlands that can be eliminated. Wetland replacement provisions should also be established which contains the following provisions:

- Developers should be required to provide the off-site lands for wetland establishment, unless a wetland mitigation bank becomes established. The City could use the approach outlined above for the establishment of a woodland mitigation bank in establishing a wetland mitigation bank;

- Wetland mitigation plans should include consideration of effects on habitat at the off-site locations;

- Wetland mitigation plans should create a variety of moisture regimes;

- Wetland mitigation plans should demonstrate a perpetual water supply, and suitable soils;

- A Wetland Mitigation Plan should be developed for each project, if avoidance is not possible, to compensate for all project caused impacts. The Mitigation Plan must be based on the concept of no net loss of wetland acreage or wetland value. The Plan should, at a minimum,

describe the methodology of restoration, species used for restoration (only native species indigenous to the area should be used), criteria to judge success of restoration (minimum 80% survival), and a contingency plan in the event of failure. Preferred location for mitigation is on-site. If the project is unable to fully mitigate project impacts to wetland habitats on-site, then a complete description of off-site mitigation should be described.

- Wetland mitigation plans should be prepared by qualified specialists experienced in restoration ecology.

2b. Reference to constraints maps, including the wetland maps, on Land Use Map. The constraints maps, including wetland maps should be referred to by a note on the Land Use Map. Application of the Open Space is preferred, but this is a major change to the proposed Plan and constitutes an alternative rather than mitigation. For the purposes of mitigation, the note should refer to the General Plan's constraints maps and worn the user that constraints may affect maximum residential densities and land use intensities; the intent is to provide a notice to prospective developers/land owners of the significant constraint and to facilitate complete project review by City staff.

2c. Additional supplemental policy language. The General Plan policies should be revised to include the following:

- All stream and wetland environments should be identified, delineated, and quantified within individual project development maps and related documents. If areas are suspected of supporting stream or wetland habitats, it is the responsibility of the project proponent to contract with a qualified botanist, biologist, or wetland specialist to verify presence or absence.

- All identified stream and wetland habitats must be fully protected through the establishment of open space buffers. These buffers shall consist of the standard widths of 100-feet above the banks or edge of any perennial streams or wetland habitats and 50-feet above the banks or edge of all intermittent or seasonal streams or wetlands uness circumstances justify different distances which are approved by the Department of Fish and Game. This setback should extend beyond the recommended distances if necessary to protect all on-site riparian wetland habitat.

Effectiveness of Measure: These measures will help assure that impacts to wetlands are reduced below the level of significance.

Implementation: Revision of Draft General Plan

Mitigation Monitoring: N/A

3. Addition of a policy specifically recognizing and protecting special natural communities. (No additional measures are needed specifically for impacts to special plants.) The Draft Plan should be revised to include a policy

recognizing and protecting those special natural plant communities of concern to and tracked by the State Natural Diversity Data Base.

Effectiveness of Measure: This measure will be effective in avoiding significant effects on special natural communities.

Implementation: Draft Plan revision

Mitigation Monitoring: Plan adoption procedures.

4. **No additional mitigation measures are necessary for impacts to special animals**

Effectiveness of Measure: Impacts are expected to be less than significant.

Implementation: N/A

Mitigation Monitoring: N/A

5. **No additional mitigation measures are available to mitigate unavoidable effects on general wildlife.**

6. **No additional mitigation measures are available to the City to address the cumulative City/County development.**